



The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, December 13. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

Quest. 1. **W**hy do the Evangelists deduce the Genealogy of our Saviour by the line of Joseph, and not by that of Mary, since he receiv'd not his Humanity by his reputed Father Joseph, but from the Blessed Virgin Mary, his Mother?

Ans. There is a Supposition in this Question, which includes another; — for many, or most Commentators believe, that one of the Evangelists draws the Genealogy by Joseph, the other by Mary: However, we are hereby almost necessarily led to the Disquisition of that very difficult Question, which may be almost call'd, *Crux Theologorum*, concerning the difference between the two Evangelists, St. Matthew, and St. Luke in this matter, having also long since receiv'd it from another Hand. We must confess we can't be of the same mind with a late famous Writer, as to the Interpretation of that Scripture, *Who shall declare his Generation?* Which he thinks relates to the difficulties in his Genealogy, left so on purpose, in his Judgment, to hinder Men from prying too narrowly into things of that Nature. However, we are sure Gods Word must be true, and Truth is always consonant to its self, and how it is so in the present Case, as to the chief difficulty therein, we shall now examine. Eusebius seems, in our Judgment, to give as clear a Solution of it, as any other. He has it out of Aphricanus, as that Historian from some Christian Jews, who were of the Kindred of our Saviour. The sum is this: "St. Matthew says, Jacob begat Joseph, St. Luke, that he was the Son of Heli, (not that Heli begat him:) St. Matthew deduces the Line from David by Solomon, St. Luke by Nathan, Matthew from Solomon begat Jacob, then died, and Melchi from Nathan, of the same Tribe, but another Race, being marry'd to the same Woman, begat Heli: So that Heli and Jacob were Brothers by the Mothers side: Heli dying without Children, Jacob according to the Law, marry'd his Wife, and of her had Joseph, his own Son by Nature, but Heli by Law: Thus was Joseph Son to both — So far Aphricanus, and Eusebius out of him. But it must be acknowledg'd, this way of solution is press'd with considerable difficulties: The chief of which, and which is pronounc'd unanswerable by the Learned Spanheim, is, that according to Aphricanus, Melchi is reckon'd the immediate Father of Eli, whereas St. Luke makes him his Great Grandfather. But notwithstanding this, Vossius is still firm for the forecited Opinion, and answers after his way: [*Certissimum nobis est*] "We are most certain, that in the old Copies there were three Persons left out by St. Luke in this Genealogy, Matthat and Levi between Melchi and Eli, and Cainan; which he thinks more probable, because Irenaeus reckons not 75 Generations, but 72 only from Adam to our Saviour. — And indeed, had there not been something in't, 'tis not very easie to conceive, how 'twas possible both for Aphricanus, and Eusebius, who were Men of Judgment; nay, we may add St. Austin too, and several other Fathers, to be guilty of so foul a blunder, as to mistake a Man's Great Grandfather for his Father, in a Genealogy which they had before 'em, and which they read also every day. But what're becomes of those two, we can't think Cainan was omitted in Irenaeus his Copy, because they then hardly used any but the LXX, for the Old Testament: And its known by all, that this Name is there, tho' not in the Hebrew, (of which more another time) and therefore, if there were three Names fewer in their Copies, than ours, what're becomes of the two in the Question, the third must be look'd for somewhere else than in Cainan. And this wou'd remove all the difficulty, but as we have formerly declar'd, we are not for invalidating the

credit of our present Copies, nor granting any mistake in 'em without an absolute necessity — Why shou'd we not therefore rather think Aphricanus, or at least Eusebius, or their Transcribers, here mistaken; then admit the Interpolation of two Names in our present Copies? Let's suppose but this, and that they wrote Melchi by a mistake, instead of Matthan, who was the real Father of Heli, and the case is just the same, and all the difficulty vanishes, the Hypothesis still holding good in one as well as the other; nor can we find any Objection that's of weight against it: 'Tis true, Grotius (who supposes Aphricanus more mistaken than we do, tho' he also thinks there's something in what he advances) is of Opinion, that it can't hold, because the Law of raising up Seed to the Brother, by the Brothers Marriage, or in his default, by the next of kin, does not relate to uterine Brethren, (of the same Mother only) but to those of the same Name and Family — but it may be answer'd, the Family of David was then reduc'd to a small number, as well as a meaner Fortune, and there might not be very great choice among them, nor any nearer Relation, on which account the nearest Kinsman fulfill'd the Law; or perhaps if there were nearer, as in the Case of Boaz, they might refuse to do it.

Now to the Querists difficulty. — Our Saviour being not the real Son of Joseph, how comes Josephs Genealogy, not Mary's, to be here recorded? Some think 'twas not the Custom of the Jews for Women to have their distinct Genealogies, but were reckon'd from their Parents, and that Eli was Mary's Father, tho' others say one Jehoiachim, which yet some think the same with Eliachim, and that with Eli, only a contraction of it, as Epaphras for Epiphrodius, and a thousand others, and that St. Luke records Mary's Genealogy, St. Matthew Josephs: But we think this more strain'd than the other, and therefore stick to our first Solution, and add as to the present Question, that he was Josephs Son by Law, he was his Son also, no doubt, by Adoption, and therefore is so reckon'd: But besides, in Josephs Genealogy, Mary's also may be contain'd, nay we are sure some of it is, and accordingly our Saviours real descent from David.

Quest. 2. Do the Scriptures teach that the Sufferings of Christ were greater than the Punishments due to the Elect?

Ans. They teach, or at least unanswerably imply, that 'tis possible for some to be destroy'd, to perish, &c. for whom Christ dyed: See Rom. 14. 15. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ dyed: Nor does the Holy Scripture use to give such solemn Directions, where there's no need; nay, where there's an impossibility of the Evils falling out, which is caution'd against, which is yet more positively expressed (tho' in the form of an Interrogation) in 1 Cor. 8. 11. And thro' thy knowledge shall thy weak Brother perish, for whom Christ dy'd.

Quest. 3. Does the Scripture assign any other End to the Sufferings of Christ, as purchased by them, besides the Salvation of the Elect?

Ans. It assigns other Ends besides the actual Salvation of those who shall be saved, as is plain from the Scriptures before quoted — We add, those Ends are, the atoning so far for the sins of all Mankind, as to make 'em in a salvable Condition, or to repair the ruines which were made by the first Adam, which we think is plain from Rom. 5. 12, 18, &c.

Quest. 4. What is that Faith which is required in the Scripture as a Duty, and without which it says there is no Salvation?

Ans. A steady Belief of all that God reveals, especially the Gospel — particularly therein, that Jesus is the Messiah, or Saviour of the World, and that he'll save me

me if I depend upon him, and obey his Commands: By which it appears that Assurance is not of the Essence of it, as we have formerly proved.

Quest. 5. Do the Scriptures teach, that Men to whom the Gospel is Preached can attain to that Faith by improvement of Natural Abilities, without the assistance of special Grace?

Ans. No: They no where affirm any such thing; but they affirm, either in Terms, or by unavoidable Consequence, that every Man under the Gospel, to whom it is Preached, has so much Grace given him, that if he improves it, 'twill certainly at last make him perfect in Glory; and if he does not thus improve it, 'tis his own fault, whence 'tis plain that he may do it, tho' still not by his own strength, but the assistance of Heaven, which never leaves Men, 'till they have first left it.

Quest. 6. Does not the Scripture command such things as Men by the Power of Natural Abilities may perform, which in their Nature have a tendency to produce Faith, and which the Spirit of God ordinarily blesteth to that End?

Ans. A Man can do no action properly and perfectly acceptable to God by his own Natural Abilities, abstracted from the assistance of God's Spirit — But by his common assistance he may Pray, abstain from sin, and several other good Actions, which if he continues in, he'll have still more aid, and go on to perfection.

Quest. 7. If Men are not guilty of Self-destruction, or great Sin and Folly, who Contemn or Omit the Use of the Means which the Spirit of God usually makes Effectual to Salvation, because they are not certain they shall be so to them?

Ans. This proceeds on a false Supposition — if they use Means, they shall be undoubtedly effectual.

Quest. 8. What way did the seven thin Ears of Corn appear to devour the thick or full Ears in Pharaoh's Dream?

Ans. We suppose, by approaching to 'em, and taking 'em within themselves, as one Sheaf or heap of Corn may be lost in another.

Quest. 9. What's the meaning of that place in the Revelations, Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments.

Ans. There's scarce any one that does not take in this meaning, Garments, for the Righteousness of Christ, without which we are naked indeed; and watching has relation to a Christian Warfare, which requires us always to stand upon our Guard, but the occasion of the Expression perhaps is borrow'd from a Custom among the Jews; there was a certain Officer that look'd after the Watchmen at Nights, and if he found any of them asleep, he beat 'em, and strip'd 'em naked, for their Punishment.

Quest. 10. I have been a Trader for many years, in which time the Goods I deal in being a Foreign Commodity, have been at various Prices; sometimes I have bought Goods, and gain'd by them moderately, and I have at several other times bought of the same sort of Goods, and by means of great quantities thereof coming to England have lost considerably by them; but 'tis my hap at this time to have a considerable quantity of the said Goods by me, of which there is none in England but what I have, and am satisfy'd that none of the same kind can arrive here for a considerable time, whereby I've an opportunity to get my Price for them. Things being thus, I desire your Opinion whether I may with a good Conscience strain up the Price of these Goods as high as I can, considering my former Losses in the same Goods, and that I may never have such another opportunity of recovering them?

Ans. First, We think there may be greater Latitude in the present Case, as to any Commodity not necessary to the Life of Man, than in Corn or such like, without which the Poor can't live. Again, if the Poor shou'd have absolute need of any of those Goods, they ought not we think to pay so dear for 'em as the Rich, who have 'em only for their Convenience or Pleasure. Further, those Goods never ought to be rais'd to an extravagant Price beyond all Conscience and Reason; as suppose a Guinea should be demanded for what was not

before worth a Shilling: After these Guards, we think there's no doubt but the Tradesman may justly raise the Price of his Goods on this occasion, so as to repair his former Losses, if he does not exceed the former Limitations, tho' the just Degree or Price we can't determine.

Quest. 11. Why is the first of August call'd Lammas-day, above all days of the Year?

Ans. At that time the Popish Priests began to make Masses, that the Lambs and Sheep might not dye all that Season by the Cold after Sheering, therefore it was call'd Lamb-mass-day.

☞ In next Tuesday's Mercury will be given an Account of a very Ingenious Project newly found out for the Ladies Entertainment these Winter Evenings, which should have been here Inserted, if we had had room.

Advertisements.

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